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SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
REMARKS EN ROUTE FROM MINSK, BELARUS, TO WASHINGTON, D.C.
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Secretary Perry: Let me start off with a summary, if I may, of these seven days.

The first point I want to make is that the whole purpose of this trip was to follow-up on the objectives that I outlined in the talk I gave at George Washington just before I left on the trip. This was the talk on the pragmatic partnership, and this trip was designed to implement that pragmatic partnership or to carry it forward to the next major objective. I think, from that point of view, it was a great success. I'm very pleased with the outcome of the trip.

Let me give you, in each of the four stops, one example of what was accomplished that ties back to these different objectives of this pragmatic partnership.

In Kazakhstan, for example, we had a good opportunity to really deepen the military-to-military relationship we have, which is one element of the pragmatic partnership. One specific example of that in Kazakhstan was that we agreed to help the Kazakhstanis set up essentially a navy in the Caspian Sea. We call it a coast guard, they call it a navy. Here's a country that has Iran on one border, Russia on another border, China on another border. They are very much concerned about their security in the world, and turning to the United States for help. It's a strategic security position in the world, and we will be working to help them. The particular example I've chosen here is the military-to-military relationship, the assistance we will give them in establishing their navy in the Caspian Sea.

The second example of the partnership was demonstrated in Ukraine. That's that part of the partnership which had to do with the dismantling of nuclear weapons. You all were down with me to Pervomaysk and saw that vividly demonstrated, that they really are taking the warheads off of the SS-19s and 24s and shipping them to Russia. That was really the most concrete example, the most vivid example I've seen of how this partnership is working.

In Belarus, where we were today, it was a clear example of defense conversion working in that we actually saw three partnerships between American companies and Belarus companies launched. We saw the first contracts being announced and these programs actually getting underway. So here is an example of the pragmatic partnership benefitting both American companies and Belarus.

Finally, in Russia, we saw an example of the partnership working in different ways altogether. We met with Grachev relative to the Partnership for Peace. They're moving forward on the Partnership for Peace. I also had some interesting discussions with him relative to their continuing working jointly with us in Bosnia to help us try to bring the conflict there to an end.

So those are four particular examples of each of the four ways in which the partnership is manifested that were spelled out in that paper, and it was a different example in each of those four countries about how that was done.

Backing away from specific countries and looking at what was happening overall there, there were two other points I wanted to highlight. First was developing close collegial relationships with each of those four Defense Ministers. That's very important to me, so that if we have a problem or a crisis, an emergency of some sort, I can get on the phone and call the Minister in Russia or the Minister in Ukraine and we know each other and we've come to sort of size up each other, and can work on problems together and try to get them resolved.

That was particularly manifested in Ukraine where we decided to add another telephonic communication line similar to the one that we have in Russia, where they were pressing us to establish this line because they want to keep communications going on a very regular basis. In this case, we'll be calling back and forth on an every-other-week basis, plus as-needed when specific instances come up. We'll get that communication line set up in the very near future.

The other general point I want to make is the power of the Nunn/Lugar program, which, as you know, was set up in the defense bill two years ago. I think '92 was the first year... So three years in that program now. We've consolidated all those resources just in the last year and have a whole set of programs being launched amounting to something over a billion dollars now. We're beginning to see the real fruits from the Nunn/Lugar program coming out. I just wanted to make the point that almost none of what we're doing now could have been accomplished if we hadn't had that program already on the books. It gave us a running start to achieving what we're trying to achieve. If we had all of these ideas and we had to go first thing to the Congress to get the legislation for it, it would have taken us a

year to even get to the point where we were last year when we started the Administration.

That sort of sums up my high points on the trip. I'm open for questions now on the trip or anything else you want to throw at me.

Q: Do you have any specific ideas on how you're going to set up a navy for Kazakhstan? Are you going to sell them ships or...

A: First of all, we're going to send a team over there. It will probably be a Coast Guard team instead of a Navy team, because the kind of functions they want to perform are not combat naval functions, they're shore patrol. Border patrol, basically. They're particularly concerned about patrolling the borders with...protecting against some of the countries of the south with radical fundamentalist movements that might be trying to infiltrate their country. So it's a Coast Guard sort of function, so our Coast Guard will be going over and meeting with them, trying to determine what kind of help they need. It will probably involve, besides technical assistance, perhaps providing them with patrol craft to do that.

Q: In terms of working with Russia on initiatives in Bosnia, can you give us any hint about what sort of cooperative actions you're looking for?

A: We have continuing discussions with them relative to the two areas they've already taken some action, namely sustaining this no-bombardment zone around Sarajevo, and you can tell from reading the news reports every day that we have to work to keep that sustained. There's always some little crisis coming up that needs tamped down. So we continually need their assistance on that one. We continue to get cooperative work on opening the Tuzla Airport. That's not quite completely resolved yet either. And then most importantly, what I discussed with both the Defense Minister and the Foreign Ministry there is working with Ambassador Redman relative to bringing Serbia into the framework peace agreement which has already been made between the Bosnians Muslims and the Bosnian Croats.

That's been a major step forward in these negotiations, but it can only go so far until or unless we get the Serbs in, too. We're looking to the Russians to work with Ambassador Redman, work with the Serbs and the Muslims and the Croats to try to bring all of that together.

Q: (Inaudible)

A: Yes. Not only did they indicate that, that is already underway. Ambassador Churken has been meeting for the last few days with Ambassador

Redman. I want to be clear that we're not looking to a condominium arrangement here. We don't want the Russians to be representing the Serbs and we represent the Muslim Croats. We want Churken and Redman to work together on a common position that we will try to advance to all of the countries.

Q: Mr. Secretary, in your speech at GW you talked about, again on the subject of hedging against the possible turning sour of the situation. Now you've been to these four countries. Did you see any signs of internal problems that you need to be wary of, and how would you assess how those four countries are getting along with each other? We heard a lot of complaints from the countries about well, Russia never provided this, or that sort of back and forth in public statements.

A: Let me make a couple of comments on that, John. The first is, I was very interested in how that speech would come over in these four countries, especially in Russia, because it was fairly blunt in terms of the possibility of it going sour and what we would have to do if that happened. I was very clear in taking the same line in Russia that I was taking in the United States -- not telling one story in the United States and another in Russia. I thought there might be some negative reaction from Russia. There was not. None at all. They considered it a very realistic assessment. They're even more concerned about the problems and things going bad over there, perhaps, than we are. So, there was no negative reaction at all on that.

Secondly, there's the reaction that gets directly to your point, the different countries over there, there's a continuing tension among those four countries -- in particular, between Russia and each of the three of them. That's understandable. They've been just separated for the last couple of years. Each one of those countries has a different level of nationalistic feeling. Ukraine, perhaps, most intense and Belarus least intense, and the Kazakhstanis somewhere in the middle.

There's little or no tension between Belarus and Russia in that regard, and I think it's because of the absence of the strong nationalist feelings in Belarus. There is not, I would say, profound tension between the Kazakhstanis and the Russians. Indeed, I discussed at some length with their Defense Minister his working relations with the Ministry of Defense in Russia and with Minister Grachev. They have good, positive working relationships.

There is some tension over the one major issue in dispute there which is the Biakonur Range. We have hopes that that will get resolved in the weeks to come, and we have told them that if they would come to us and ask us to assist them -- both countries, not just one or the other -- that we would be willing to be a neutral intermediary.

Q: On the internal situation in each country, each place we went to we were hearing about hyper-inflation. One of the things you mentioned in your speech as a problem was the custodianship of the weapons and the quality. We heard first-hand at Pervomaysk about how they don't have any money, and some of these people are homeless and so forth. Again, now that you've been on the trip, how do you size up those issues?

A: I continue to have confidence in the professionalism of the people that are overseeing those nuclear weapons, and in the fact that they still are under very tight control. I saw nothing on this trip to cause me to be concerned on that point.

Q: Didn't you also offer to act as an intermediary on the Black Sea Fleet, the problems they're having on the Black Sea Fleet?

A: Let me be clear on that one, again, General Ridetskiy asked me if the United States would be willing to be a neutral intermediary on the Black Sea Fleet. Much as the same question had come up about Biakonur in Kazakhstan. My answer to him was the same. If Russia and Ukraine both came to us and asked us to be a neutral intermediary there, we would certainly consider that positively. But it was absolutely required that both countries thought it could be useful and asked us to do it. We are not pushing ourselves forward, we're not imposing. If we got involved it would be as a neutral intermediary. We could not be useful if we took sides. The moment we take sides on it, we lose our utility as a third party on this.

Q: Has Russia said anything about (inaudible)?

A: We have gotten no feedback from Russia on that, yet. We no doubt, will because General Ridetskiy announced his interest in doing that at that press conference the other night.

Q: Back on the relations among the four nations, sir, to your relation with your counterparts in those countries...the American relation with those four countries. How do you think the dynamics have changed? I think John mentioned, in a story yesterday, that there was sort of an air of you as an impassive CEO coming upon these various countries who essentially were seeking money from you. I'm just wondering if you can reflect back on how the relationship existed between us and those nations during the Cold War when it was the Soviet Union, and how it is today. You're dealing with fragments of a former super power, yet they've all got or have various pieces of a nuclear arsenal. How does it affect the relationship that it's sort of tilting now?

A: I think we have a very strong and a very positive relationship with each of those four countries. The least important part of it is the areas in which we're providing financial assistance. Number one in making this relationship positive is that they have enormous respect for the professionalism and the quality

of the U.S. military. And the military-to-military relationship we have is powerful, it's very strong with them. I sensed that in every one of the four countries I was in. That was the first thing they wanted to talk about, about the things that we're doing to strengthen our miliary-to-military relationship then... I only gave you one or two examples of that in the discussion, but I could discuss that at more length.

The second area that's important, that we push it forward, has been the nuclear dismantling. Since we make that front and center in our discussions with them, then that always plays an important role.

But they see what we're doing there as being helpful and beneficial to them, too. Because they want to bring those nuclear arsenals down. It takes a lot of money to do that, particularly to do it without messing up the environment. So that's a mutually beneficial role there. Then finally this defense conversion. They see that money as being very important. But I would put a different twist on the story than John did. We're not giving that money to them, we're giving that money to U.S. companies who add their own money to it and then invest in ventures in Russia.

I had no interest in having WPA projects where I just passed out money to Russian companies where we have no way of knowing how it's going to be used or how effective it's going to be. So what we're doing is a very different program from that. It's not a dole program, giving money to these other countries. It's investing in projects where we believe they can be beneficial and where we have some element of control in the other projects they're formulating.

Q: ...us what's going on militarily in terms of North Korea? Will the United States be sending anything else besides Patriot missiles there? Are U.S. troops on a higher state of alert? Is there any indication of anything going on militarily in the North? Any troop movements or that sort of thing?

A: Let me start off by giving you my impression that there is no military crisis at this stage, and no sense of imminent war, no sense of an imminent military danger.

The political situation is very worrisome and it's a matter of great concern. We do not see ourselves in danger of military attack, and our response reflects that. Let me take the Patriot, for example. What we've done with Patriot is moved the employment date forward. Under our long term plans we were going to send that out later this year, I think November was the planned date. We have moved it forward -- not because we thought it was an emergency. If we thought it was an emergency, we would have flown it over. But because if there's an emergency later in the year, and if there were an emergency, we'd have to fly it over there. We

would really tie up airlift at a time we don't want to tie up airlift. So this is a prudent measure of putting it on ships and sending it over there so that if there's an emergency later on we will not have to tie up airlift getting it here. That was the importance or the timing of the Patriot. It clearly indicates...our judgment was that there's not a military emergency, or we would not have sent it over by ships.

The only thing different on alert basis over there is that during the period that President Kim is in China, we have both the South Korean and the American troops, officers and leaders, are directed to stay in communications. That is not to go on leave, not to break communication. That's a very modest increase.

We have under discussion with the South Koreans other measures that we might take in a defensive measure, and what sort of a contingency might develop that would cause us to take those measures, but we have not triggered any such actions at this point. It's strictly contingency planning.

Q: Are we close to triggering it, though?

A: No. Well, you mean close in time?

Q: Close in action. Could it happen overnight?

A: No. It would not happen overnight unless North Korea did something totally unexpected.

The next event which would cause us to reconsider timing would come after the UN acts on this IAEA report. My estimate is that the UN will settle on a demand to North Korea to reopen their nuclear sites for inspection, and North Korea will have such and such a period of time to respond to that. If, at the end of that period of time they haven't responded or if they simply say no, then the UN will have to go to its next step and there will be a consideration of some level of sanctions. If sanctions at any level are authorized, then that will cause us to reconsider increasing our defensive measures in Korea. So that would be the next event. Not because sanctions themselves are provocative, but because North Korea has stated very clearly that they believe that sanctions at any level would be provocative. While that might just be rhetoric, it would be imprudent on our part not to take that seriously and provide some reasonable defensive measures.

Q: (Inaudible) Troop levels...

A: On that I can't say yet, Charlie. We have a variety of contingency plans. We have, as we speak, those are being discussed between General Luck and the South Koreans. Discussed in the sense that they're looking over the set of

standard contingency plans they had prepared and deciding how to modify or change them, or how to tie them to the UN events that are coming along.

The spectrum of contingency plans they have is very broad, but if what we're looking at is introducing a modest level of sanctions, then I believe that would lead to a modest increase in defensive levels -- probably not including substantial amounts of additional troops. I say substantial amount, because even when we send the Patriot over, that involves some increase. It's not the idea of getting more troops over there, its that you need the troops to man the battalions.

Q: (Inaudible)
A: We're sending over one battalion. The battalion will have about 40 launchers.

Q: The idea that North Korea would consider sanctions provocative, and ...(inaudible).

A. (Inaudible)...a vague term, and it could involve anywhere between three and six batteries. The number that they decided to send will probably include about 40 launchers, and each launcher has four missile...

Q: The idea that...
A: The exact number is classified. I'm just giving you round figures. Before I said 40 batteries. I misspoke, Jamie, it's 40 launchers.

Q: I was going to say that the idea that North Korea would consider the sanctions provocative and therefore, might lead you to increase strength over there, does that also lead you to conclude that sanctions are a bad idea because of...
A: No. It's hard to answer that question in a sentence, and I don't want to give a dissertation. But when we look at the danger posed to world stability by North Korea with its million-man army forward deployed, and it's really bellicose rhetoric, and we think we don't want to provoke that because of the dangers, I think in two years from now if we had that same bellicose rhetoric, the same million-man army and 20 missiles with nuclear warheads on it. So in that light, logically we'd be back to the fact that as dangerous as the situation is, it would be even more dangerous if you added a substantial number of nuclear weapons. Therefore, our policy right along has been oriented to try to keep North Korea from getting a significant nuclear weapon capability. For precisely the reason that...(inaudible).

Q: You say you want to keep them from having a significant nuclear weapon capability. That implies they may already have an insignificant nuclear weapon capability.

A: They might.

Q: That's the state of your knowledge?

A: That's the state of my knowledge. They might. They might have one or two nuclear devices, and they might or might not have them fitted to go on missiles. Honestly, we don't know that. I'm not being evasive on it. We just don't know for sure what the answer to that is.

Q: (Inaudible)

A: We don't know anything we can do about that. If they have the nuclear device, we don't know where it is or what to do about it. What we can do something about, though, is stopping them from building beyond that, and that's what we're trying to direct our attention to.

Q: The whole idea of Russia and peacekeeping fascinates me, especially with the West's reluctance to send peacekeeping troops in large numbers to Bosnia. You said yourself before that you don't think there's wide support in the United States for sending large numbers of troops to Bosnia. Is there a chance that the Russians, especially with this Partnership for Peace, could offer, if there's a peace agreement, could offer 10,000 to 15,000 troops themselves? And maybe the United States would only have to send 10,000.

A: That's a very good question, Charlie. Let me broaden it a little bit. First of all, I don't believe there's going to be the same reluctance to send peacekeeping troops to Bosnia if the various diplomatic/military initiatives that have been taken in the last month or so continue to be as successful as they are. People are reluctant to send peacekeeping troops into a bottomless hole where they're committed forever and they can't see any results. But we're getting results there now. Therefore, I think there's going to be a much more positive view about maintaining the peace there if it looks like we've really achieved it. That's the first point.

The second point is, I think there is a greater willingness to send troops for peacekeeping that has been indicated by the discussions that were occurring this winter, particularly the earlier part of the winter, in the fall. One of the reasons we seem to run into a shortage of troops is that the UN has excluded itself from considering certain troops that would be willing to go. Turks, Greeks, Italians... because they're neighbors or because of some historical reasons. And the Russians fall into somewhat of that category, too, because of their connection with the Serbs.

It's not beyond the imagination of the UN to think of a way of deploying those units in some way that is not going to be provocative. Indeed, the United Nations is now considering sending a logistics battalion of Turks to assist in the

U.S. peacekeeping forces. If that happens they'll probably agree to have the Greek troops there as well. With that opening of thinking to include other forces there, that would certainly involve opening it up to more Russian forces there, as well.

A final comment to that point. If we had the Partnership for Peace functioning and we had peacekeeping units training and working together, this problem would be a lot easier to solve.

Press: Thank you.

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